

Caldwell: On First Anniversary of Constitution, Democracy Marching Forward



An Iraqi man receives his voting papers at a Mosul polling station during the constitutional referendum on Oct. 15, 2005. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. James L. Harper Jr.)

It has been one year since Iraqis approved their constitution on Oct. 15, 2005. More than 80 percent of Iraqis voting in the referendum cast their ballots for the document.

The new constitution set Iraq down the path of responsive, democratic leadership. In December, 12 million Iraqis voted for candidates for the Council of Representatives. By May, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'ite, President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, and Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, a Sunni, had become Iraq's first democratically elected leaders in 50 years.

Iraqis continue to confront challenges to their nation's security and prosperity, but the framework for governance is holding. The Council has passed crucial laws. Elected leaders are abiding by the political process, working within the constitution's framework.

Challenges remain in Iraq, including addressing private militias. Reports paint grim pictures of finger pointing in the government, but leaders continue to talk. Violence and progress coexist in Iraq. One year since the constitution was ratified, the government is acting the way a democracy should: with deliberation, decisiveness and strength. (Link: Maj. Gen. Caldwell's Oct. 14 [column](#).)

Casey: Council of Representatives Laws Helping Unite, Secure Iraq

Iraq's Council of Representatives is working to bring Iraqis the unity, security and prosperity they desire.

The Council has met 47 times to address Iraq's most pressing and potentially divisive issues.

The Council recently passed the Regions Law. This law establishes the procedures required for provinces to join or form

regions (not divide Iraq into three parts as widely reported).

The Fuel Import Liberalization Law is designed to thwart black-market sales, improve fuel supplies and reduce corruption.

The Investment Law provides financial incentives for foreign companies interested in investing in Iraq.

In November the Council is slated to tackle perhaps its toughest challenge – the Hydrocarbon Law, which will ensure a fair distribution of Iraq's oil revenues.

This law will also further assure Iraqis that their government is truly committed to achieving unity through an equitable apportionment of national prosperity.

(Link: Gen. Casey's Oct. 15 [column](#).)

New Coast Guard Facility Increases Security at Two Key Iraqi Ports

A new base at the port of Umm Qasr will increase the security of Iraq's waterways, ports and coast, helping to fight the smuggling that drains Iraq's economy.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently turned over the \$3.26 million forward operating base to the Iraqis.

The facility will provide the Iraqi Coast Guard a secure operating base along the Khor Az Zubair waterway. The base will give the Coast Guard better visibility of the waterways and port operations, increasing security for ports in Umm Qasr and Khor Az Zubair.

The project was started in 2005. It features administration buildings, boat and vehicle hardstands, a boat ramp, pier with floating dock, perimeter fencing, and a fuel point and power supply facility.



The new forward operating base at the Port of Umm Qasr gives the Iraqi Coast Guard more resources to fight smuggling in Iraq's coastal waters and rivers. (Link to Oct. 5 Iraq Reconstruction Report [newsletter](#).)